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MAY MEETING, 1885.

The regular meeting was held on Thursday, the 14th instant, at three P. M. ; the President, Dr. GEORGE E. ELLIS, being in the chair.

The minutes of the last meeting were read by the Recording Secretary.

The list of donors to the Library was submitted by the Librarian.

A Catalogue of the paintings, engravings, busts, and miscellaneous articles belonging to the Cabinet of the Society, which has been recently published under direction of the Cabinet-keeper, Dr. Oliver, was laid on the table for the members.

The Hon. Lincoln F. Brigham, of Salem, Chief Justice of the Superior Court, was elected a Resident Member of the Society.

The Recording Secretary and Messrs. Clement Hugh Hill and Alexander McKenzie were appointed a Committee on publishing the Proceedings.

The PRESIDENT raised the question whether the declaratory act of Parliament affirming a right to bind the colonies by legislation in all cases whatsoever, was passed before the Stamp Act was repealed. The question, he said, was an important one, — whether the ministry repealed the act, as if confessing a mistake, thus leaving matters where they were before ; or whether, before repealing it, they chose by this act to retain a full and absolute control of the colonies.

Mr. HILL thought that the declaratory act was passed first ; and among other writers he referred to Macaulay's article on Lord Chatham, as showing that this was the fact.

Mr. DEANE called attention to a remark of Mr. Savage, in Winthrop, vol. ii. p. 88, that John " Harvard's will was probably nuncupative, as it is nowhere recorded ; " and said he thought the remark was inadvertently made, although repeated in the second edition of Winthrop, since nuncupative wills were matters of record as well as written ones, — a fact

that Mr. Savage could not have been ignorant of.¹ But legal provision was not made for recording wills in Massachusetts till September, 1639, a year after Harvard's death.² His will, written or nuncupative, though not recorded, was probably placed on file, and, like many other early wills, is lost. Quite likely an attested copy was sent to England, where Harvard is supposed to have left property; and it may yet be found there.

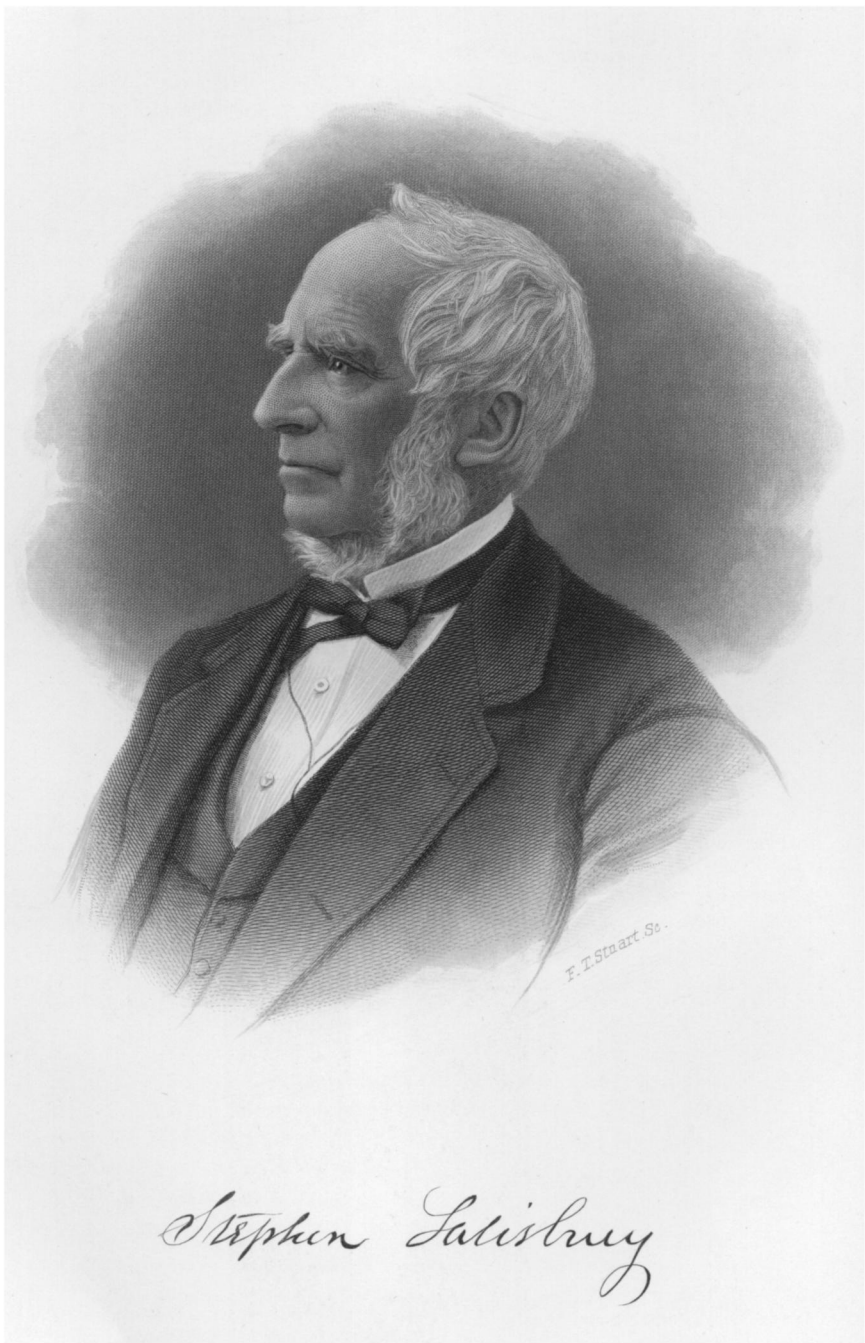
Further remarks on this subject were made by Mr. G. S. Hale, Dr. Paige, Judge Chamberlain, and Mr. Appleton.

Mr. PUTNAM presented to the Society, from Dr. Thomas E. Pickett, of Maysville, Kentucky, an electrotype *fac-simile* of the Great Seal of the Confederate States of America, dated Feb. 12, 1862, the original of which was made in London in 1864 for James M. Mason, the representative of the Southern Confederacy in England, and was designed as a symbol of sovereignty.

Mr. WASHBURN presented a memoir of the late Hon. Stephen Salisbury, which he had been appointed to prepare.

¹ See vol. i. of Recorded Wills in Suffolk Registry.

² See Col. Records, vol. i. pp. 275, 276.



Stephen Salisbury

MEMOIR

OF THE

HON. STEPHEN SALISBURY, LL.D.

BY JOHN D. WASHBURN.

THE conditions and circumstances which attended Mr. Salisbury's birth, his life and his death, were unique. It is impossible to think of him without recalling some of them. Their contemplation gives rise to startling contrasts between the character which actually was, and that which was likely to be, developed by and under them. He was born in a small and beautiful interior town, containing hardly more than two thousand inhabitants, on a great domain now not improperly termed ancestral, in the midst of a community small in population, yet marked by high standards of social, literary, and professional attainment. His life extended through a period of more than eighty-six years. He died on the same tract of land on which he was born, and within a few rods of the exact spot, never having lived on any other than this, which he had inherited as sole heir. This large estate, by a rare coincidence, he transmitted to his successor as sole heir, though in a commonwealth where the system of primogeniture is unknown. He died in a city of nearly seventy thousand inhabitants. He had thus seen its population increase thirty-fold, the pastures of his boyhood become the site of a multifarious and prosperous industry to the establishment and development of which his intelligent co-operation had largely contributed, and which, in its turn, had largely repaid his interest and support, increasing the value of the various sections of his estate "some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred" fold. He was cradled in wealth, though not in luxury; he lived in wealth, but not in lavishness or display; he died in the midst of, and as the possessor

of wealth greater at the time of his death than at any earlier day, yet in the same simplicity in which he had always lived. Born to a position of influence and social prominence, he maintained that position steadily to the end. No social or political jealousies assailed him or disturbed his peace. He was never engaged in active business, and its rivalries and fierce competitions never reached him. More than perhaps any other citizen of Massachusetts, he resembled in his position and opportunities an English nobleman, in the great hereditary interests he controlled, and as the unquestioned head of the social and cultivated life of the community. He maintained his great influence chiefly because his life was so different from what might have been anticipated, and was at each successive period a fresh and gratifying surprise. In youth, in manhood and in age, he was always doing more and better things than expectation, or even hope, could possibly have looked for. Hence the story of his life, related simply and without panegyric or rhetorical adornment, is at once a eulogy and an encouragement,—a eulogy of himself, and an encouragement to all who start in the race of life handicapped, not by the ills of poverty, but by the burdens and dangers of wealth, so often paralyzing to effort and depressing to honorable and unselfish ambition. If it be true, as alleged by Dr. Johnson, that

“Slow rises worth by poverty depressed,”

not less true is it that, in the great majority of instances, slow is the development of intellectual life and power weighted down by the burden of large inherited possessions.

Stephen Salisbury was born in Worcester, in the old Salisbury mansion on Lincoln Square, on the 8th of March, 1798. He was the only son of Stephen Salisbury, who was the son of Nicholas Salisbury, and who came to Worcester from Boston in 1767. The elder Stephen Salisbury was a merchant of that old school which combined the business of importer and distributor. The business was carried on in a one-story building on the Salisbury estate, but its operations extended widely through the county and State. The elder Salisbury died in 1829, at the age of eighty-two.

The subject of this memoir received his earlier education in the public schools of the town of Worcester, and afterwards went to the Leicester Academy, then a somewhat famous

school of preparation, to be fitted for college. He entered Harvard in 1813, and was graduated in the class of 1817. The present writer had the honor to meet the survivors of that class many years after their graduation, and to carry to them the greetings of the class of 1853, then celebrating its twentieth anniversary by a dinner over which he had the fortune to preside. Late in the evening it was learned that the class of 1817 was dining with Mr. Salisbury under the same roof. The class of 1853 deputed its presiding officer to bear its greetings to its seniors by thirty-six years. The scene was a memorable one, and never to be forgotten. Mr. Salisbury occupied the chair. On one side of him was seated George Bancroft, and on the other Caleb Cushing, — names illustrious in literature and jurisprudence, — and around the board sat President Woods, George B. Emerson, and other surviving classmates, not unworthy associates of men so eminent as these. To the brief address of the president of the younger class, Mr. Salisbury made a reply, crowding into the space of a few minutes many reminiscences of college days, with expressions of loyalty to Alma Mater and to the cause of sound learning in general. He closed with a line of Virgil, which he said he would adopt as the motto of his class, but which may well be quoted here as the motto and key-note of his own long life: —

“*Mobilitate viget, viresque acquirit eundo.*”

For his classmates, as classmates, he had that cordial regard which was characteristic of the kindly men of that early day, when classes were small and the members personally and even intimately known to one another. He not unfrequently entertained them at his hospitable board, and in his will left to several of them substantial tokens of his remembrance and affection. He was always loyal to the University, though, as a representative of the older methods of education, he deprecated the modern system of elective studies, never hesitating to avow his conviction that for those whose selections must necessarily be made without the aid and guidance of experience of their own, it was far better that the earlier courses of study be prescribed by the experience of others. He was a member of the Board of Overseers from 1871 to 1883. A great lover of the ancient languages, and familiar with their literature, he made, in 1858, a donation to the Library, “to be

expended in the purchase of books in the Greek and Latin languages, and in books in other languages illustrating Greek and Latin books." In 1875 the Corporation conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

It is the object of this memoir, not so much to state the bare facts of Mr. Salisbury's life in chronological order, as to show by the statement of them how much he accomplished in the various departments of usefulness in which his sympathies were enlisted, and to the advancement of which his hand was so diligently set. Thus, in the present connection, his contributions to the cause of education and sound learning may be considered. It will be seen, by the contemplation of them, that the story of his life does not tend to prove or illustrate the correctness of the position of certain modern critics, that classical education necessarily alienates its votaries from active interest in the practical training of men in other departments of knowledge, or that other theory, that Harvard University teaches her sons, directly or by implication, to limit the range of their sympathies to those with whom elegance in letters is the chief object of ambition.

He was a member of the first Board of Directors of the Worcester Free Public Library, one of the most beneficent of the institutions of that city, the object of which was to bring home to the humblest of her citizens the opportunities of cultivation which had been formerly reserved for people of wealth or easy circumstances. He was a patient and laborious member of this Board for twelve years, and for eight years its president; and he only left it when the Library was an accomplished and permanent success.

Although not the literal founder of the Worcester County Free Institute of Industrial Science, he was the first, and till the day of his death the only, president of the Board of Trustees, and its largest pecuniary benefactor. This is not an institution for the study of the classics, but for instruction in science and its application to the useful arts. His interest in its success never failed nor flagged; and that success, signal as it has been, was probably due more to his intelligent and constant support than to any other one cause. He was present at and presided over every annual Commencement, from the year 1871 up to and including the year 1884. He was thus, for so many years, liberally devoting his time, his means, and his

influence to the promotion of those studies which savor not of the cloister, the library, the forum, but of the workshop, the laboratory, the factory, and the railroad.

He was elected a member of this Society in 1858, and was a frequent and interested attendant on its meetings. But his principal interest in this general department of learning was with the American Antiquarian Society, of which he was for forty-four years a member, and for thirty years the President. His contributions to its funds were large and frequent, and to its Proceedings many and valuable. It was what he did for that distinguished institution which chiefly gave him his reputation among scholars and men of letters and learning throughout the country, and, to some extent at least, beyond the sea. And while he did much for the Society in the way of material aid, in contributions to its Proceedings and in abundant and elegant hospitality toward its members, it is only just to add that the Society's cordial appreciation and support were a large recompense to him, the value of which he was always ready and glad to recognize.

For fifteen years he was the Treasurer, and for eighteen years a Trustee, of the Peabody Museum of American Archæology at Cambridge, for many years a Trustee of the Leicester Academy, and he occupied the relation of adviser or contributor to many other educational institutions. And in behalf of that other kind of education, the importance of which is so fully recognized in the abstract, but to which in modern times less practical attention is paid than in earlier days,—religious and Biblical education,—his service was a permanent and valuable one. He was for many years one of the Vice-Presidents of the Massachusetts Bible Society, the largest contributor to its funds, and also Treasurer of the Worcester County Bible Society. Of many other associations of a public or quasi-public character—as, for example, the Horticultural and Agricultural Societies—he was a frequent benefactor and a constant friend.

It is now proper to consider the relations of one so far removed from his earliest youth from the necessities of labor, and who was never known to receive pecuniary compensation for any service rendered, to what is known as “business.” He held strictly to the doctrine that every man of wealth should be the manager of his own affairs, and actively con-

ducted the details of the care of his large estate. Yet he found time, in the midst of all that care, to render as much service to several financial institutions as is usually given by those to whom such service is a chief means of support.

After leaving college, he studied law with the late Samuel McGregor Burnside, a practitioner of eminence, and was admitted to the Worcester Bar, of which, at the time of his death, he was the senior member. It is doubtful if he at any time intended to enter on the practice of the profession, but he believed that the study of the law afforded the best training for one whose life was probably to be passed in the care of important interests or in the leading positions of public or private life. For fifty-one years he was a director in the Worcester Bank, and for thirty-nine years was its president, succeeding in that important trust the Hon. Daniel Waldo in 1845. In the directors' room of that institution he was to be found in daily attendance, rendering the same services that might properly have been expected from a conscientious salaried official. For twenty-five years he was the President of the Worcester County Institution for Savings, one of the largest trusts in the Commonwealth, in which position also he was the successor of Mr. Waldo. For nearly forty years he was a director in the Worcester and Nashua Railroad Company, and for a time its president.

Mr. Salisbury never had a taste for public office. He did not decline to serve, for short periods, in positions of importance, legislative or municipal; but even in the days of the old Whig primacy and dignity in this Commonwealth, such places had little charm for him: in this later day of more promiscuous political association and less agreeable personal contacts, they would probably have been intolerable to him. He treated every man, whatever his occupation or education, with due respect and considerate kindness; but his standards of personal character were very high, and he could never have brought himself into complicity in political barterings, or exchanges of influence for mutual advantage. He was a Selectman of the town of Worcester, an Alderman of the city, for two years a Representative in the Legislature, for two years a Senator, and at two national elections a Presidential Elector.

He was thrice married. To his first wife, Rebekah Scott, daughter of Aaron and Phila Dean, of Charlestown, New

Hampshire, he was married on the 7th of November, 1833. Of her was born his only son, Stephen Salisbury, a member of this Society. She died July 24, 1843. His second wife was Nancy Hoard, widow of Captain George Lincoln, who was a son of Governor Levi Lincoln, and was killed in the Mexican War. She died Sept. 4, 1852. His third and last wife was Mary Grosvenor, widow of the Hon. Edward D. Bangs. She died Sept. 25, 1864; and for the last twenty years of his life, he occupied, with his son, the present mansion-house, which was built by him in 1837, and stands, as has been said, but a few rods from the original Salisbury Mansion in which he was born.

In the consideration which it is now proposed to give to Mr. Salisbury's intellectual quality and attainments, it will not be claimed for him that he was, in the full sense of that term, an exact scholar. That characterization should be reserved for men who devote themselves almost exclusively to scholarly pursuits, and who are found principally in the ranks of professional teachers, or students and writers in the special departments of human knowledge. But he maintained that high grade of general scholarship which belongs to and marks the cultivated and accomplished gentleman. His contributions made at various times to the Proceedings of the Antiquarian Society well illustrate this, as also do the daily habits of his life in this regard, with which his near personal friends were familiar. A brief reference to some of those contributions will not be out of place in this memoir. It may be said, however, in general, that he wrote in a clear and simple style, with occasionally a quaint turn of thought or phrase, savoring a little of the form and manner of the ancient school. He was a lover of, and familiar with, the English Classics of the earlier part of the eighteenth century, and that familiarity revealed itself not unfrequently in the style of his composition. He had little imagination, and did not rely even on what he had in the preparation of historical papers, or in the presentation of historical facts; an honest way of dealing, which genuine students of history appreciate wherever they find it. In almost every volume, indeed in almost every number, of the Proceedings since his accession to the presidency, will be found some memorial of deceased members, some comments on the needs of the Society, the condition of its library, the

results of its studies and researches, which are fairly representative of the mental characteristics of their author. Two or three of them are entitled to especial mention, as being not only valuable contributions to the literature of Archæology, but as illustrating the tone and quality of his mind, and the scope and variety of his intellectual tastes.

“An Essay on the Time of making the Statues of Christ and Moses,” written by Mr. Salisbury, was read by him before the Council, Sept. 30, 1861, and, by request of the Council, read before the Society at the Annual Meeting, Oct. 21, 1861. It is a critical and graceful analysis of historical probabilities, marked by a rare appreciation of the artistic quality and greatness of Michael Angelo. Especially is it marked by that religious and reverent tone which was so modestly conspicuous in the conduct of the author’s life, and may be observed, with more or less of distinctness, in all he said or wrote, particularly in the Report of the Council in 1863, on “The Opposition of Science, falsely so called, to Revealed Religion.” In this last essay is a clear indication at once of the dignified earnestness of his religious convictions and the liberality with which he welcomed all aids to the interpretation and true understanding of those portentous disclosures of the Divine will and purposes which affect and control the destiny of man in this world and in the eternal world to come.

“Troy and Homer: Remarks on the Discoveries of Dr. Heinrich Schliemann in the Troad,” a Report of the Council to the American Antiquarian Society in 1875, is a masterly discussion, on which alone a claim for its author to literary and classical distinction might well be based. It illustrates the characteristics of Mr. Salisbury’s scholarship, his warm devotion to what may be called the old school of classical study, and his impression of the soundness of some modern views as to the merits of the Greek language. The following extract shows something of his feeling and also his power of expression on themes like these:—

“The offer of Dr. Schliemann to give to his contemporaries a lively sense of the reality of the heroes and incidents described by Homer has not excited the interest and enthusiasm which would have greeted it a hundred years ago. The great Epics no longer retain the first place, though their dethronement has left it vacant. The overturn, that men call progress, has crushed to earth for a time the greatest benefactors of

our own race, and their noblest works. It would be instructive to recall the names of this noble army of martyrs. Herodotus, the father of history, was not long since scorned as the father of lies; and he stood for a while in mute merit on the shelf, until respect and authority have been restored to him. And at this moment the most perfect dramatist of all time is assaulted, to rob him of his sock and his buskin, to give them to one who never deserved them and could never wear them. Homer has suffered the common fate. It is in vain that he is always genial and attractive, elevating in sentiment, and in moral purity superior to the customs of his age. He scatters broadcast gems of truth that sparkle with new light as human intelligence is increased.

‘Age cannot wither *him*, nor custom stale
His infinite variety.’

Philosophers and historians who have for the longest time been honored with the confidence and admiration of mankind, appeal to Homer as their oracle. And if modern statesmen would acquaint themselves with the policy and the divine right of kings, they may go back to the ancient compendium which Alexander declared to be, in his opinion, ‘a perfect portable treasure of military virtue and knowledge.’ Though civil freedom was then unknown, Homer has expressed the value of personal liberty in words that cannot be forgotten :—

‘Jove fixed it certain, that whatever day
Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away.’
Odyssey (Pope), xvii. 322.

There are other causes of this change than the caprice of fashion, the ‘giddy and unfirm’ fancies of men, to which literature, not less than love, is subjected. The Greek language has been one of the foundations of the intellectual power of past time. But now the learned and unlearned have conspired to deprive it of its pre-eminence, and to restrict or discontinue its use in colleges and schools of the highest grade. The first effect of this is already perceived, and Greek literature has faded from the knowledge of English readers. So far as the privileges of scholarship are concerned, this movement is of little importance. Scholars will only be more conspicuous, if they enjoy a culture in which the active community have no share. When the teaching of Greek is continued in our schools, the Homeric poems are not, as formerly, studied and committed to memory more than any other books in the language. They have given way to works of a later period, that are fitted to teach the language in its systematic and perfect form; and these influences, adverse to these poems, are strengthened by the criticism that suggests the probability that an indefinite number of Homers have made up unfitted parts which for thousands of years have been admired as well-framed structures, and that the pictures which they pre-

sent are not historical or even poetical representations of human passions and experience, but mere allegorical myths. And to all these are added charges of contradiction, inconsistency, and general want of skill, with many specifications."

These charges and specifications are then taken up in order, and discussed with an earnestness and vigor which must challenge the admiration of the reader, whatever his impression as to the correctness of the conclusions reached by the author.

His devotion to the truth in history, and denial of any room for imagination in her annals, is well illustrated by a memorable contribution to the archives of the American Antiquarian Society at its Annual Meeting, Oct. 21, 1873, entitled "A Memorial of Governor John Endecott." A single extract may properly find place here : —

"When History takes her place among the Muses, and wields the witchery of imagination and passion, she gains a power over the opinions and memory of men that she cannot have with the dry annals of truth. It is a glorious privilege 'when it moves in charity and turns on the poles of truth.' But the license of a poet gives him no right

'To point a moral or adorn a tale'

by the traditions of party strife, which are not supported by better authorities. Governor Endecott has now, in the minds of some people of the best education, not the character that Governor Winthrop and Morton and Hubbard and other contemporaries have awarded to him, but the cold and cruel image in which our two most admired poets have represented him. In the New England tragedy entitled 'John Endecott,' Mr. Longfellow has made so prominent the gloomy characteristics imputed to the Governor in Sewall's History, that few will remember that the poet also says : —

'He is a man, both loving and severe;
A tender heart; a will inflexible.
None ever loved him more than I have loved him. .
He is an upright man and a just man
In all things save his treatment of the Quakers.'

And these friendly words are turned to gall by this response, put into the mouth of the Governor's son : —

'Yet have I found him cruel and unjust
Even as a father.'

After search and inquiry, I can discover no evidence that the disposition of Governor Endecott towards his children was different from the affection which he manifested for his friends.

"The wrongs of the Quakers is a theme acceptable to Mr. Whittier, not only on account of his brotherhood in the sect, but more so because he has a brother's love for all who suffer and are strong. In his sweet and pathetic poem entitled 'Cassandra Southwick,' his sympathy for the oppressed seems to have led him to forget that justice is due even to the agents of oppression. His account of an attempt to sell Cassandra Southwick, to be carried out of the country into slavery, as was then practised, is thus introduced:—

'And on his horse, with Rawson, his cruel clerk, at hand,
Rode dark and haughty Endecott, the ruler of the land.

And poisoning with his evil words the ruler's ready ear,
The priest leaned o'er his saddle with laugh and scoff and jeer.'

We have seen that there were many occasions when the interest of the Colony and a sense of duty would compel Governor Endecott to be grave and stern. But he would not have retained, as he did through his long life, the respect and confidence of his people if he had been a dark demon, with clergymen for counsellors, who were mocking fiends. The priest alluded to by the poet must have been either John Norton or John Wilson. There is a general assent to the testimony of Hubbard, that Norton was 'a man of great worth and learning, one that had the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to the weary soul.' And Nathaniel Morton, a contemporary, says: 'John Wilson was charitable when there were any signs or hopes of good, and yet, withal, very zealous against known and manifest evils. Very few that ever went out of this world were so generally beloved and revered as this good man.'

The foregoing extracts are made a part of this memoir, that through them the subject may be allowed in some degree to describe himself, and to reveal to the reader some of the leading characteristics of his intellectual and moral nature. Through them we see Mr. Salisbury as a man of decided accomplishments, a lover of classical literature, a believer in classical studies, a writer of pure and impressive English, a sincere and honest reader of history, an earnest champion and defender of historic truth. Independence of thought and truthfulness in character and conduct were his leading characteristics. His manners were those usually ascribed to the "old school." His greeting to all was kindly, and in the best sense he may be said to have been no "respector of persons." He was, in age and personal appearance, a notable figure in a community of which he may be said to have been, for the latter years of his

life, the leading citizen. His influence never waned, and was always on the side of all good enterprises. He believed the highest duty of man to be the overcoming of evil and the promotion of good. To all movements for this end he offered his hearty and effective co-operation. His religion was cheerful and inspiring. He believed in life, and that death was but the birth into a larger and fuller life. It came to him, as a relief from some measure of suffering, but especially from the weariness of physical decline, on the 24th of August, 1884.